

added to their list, plus the fact that there was not even one comfortable chair in the entire building. Thus my target was shot down, without reaching any great height. It took three years of summer holidays at the Mill, to convince me that it would be an impossible undertaking on my own.

Besides, Eatons had invited me back again as Director of Women's Recreation, with a more lucrative salary attached, which I could not overlook. My home in Oshawa was easily sold, and I was fortunate to find an ideal house in the same Avenue Road district where I had lived previously. There, my mother died and I continued another twelve years work with this great department store.

In the meantime, I was able to visit Philadelphia, and hoped Ethel might sell the Mill, and her house at 2014 Pine Street. The former eventually was successful, but for the latter, time ran out on me. It was all far from an easy task.

She still treasured the Mill and everything itemized in her mind that she had packed in various drawers, cupboards and corners of the building.

It took many trips to Philly and Almonte before an ideal buyer could be found. The new owner was Major James (Jamie) F. Leys, of Scottish ancestry, and newly retired from the British and Canadian Intelligence department connected with the Army. It was his ambition to have the Mill become a McKenzie Museum, as he was a great devotee of Tait's work. It would contain many of McKenzie's figures and the settler's artifacts collection which had been carefully listed designating where all the pieces came from, as well as the year they were used.

Ethel contacted me to see if I could possibly pack her treasures from the Mill. This was not only a challenge, but an experience as well.

---  
Letters then flew back and forth, and the packing was "on".

Familiar with Ethel's temperament, I had the McKenzie family lawyer check and sign all lists of items packed by me. It was a good idea, and proved most useful. The kegs and boxes were loaded into my car as she suggested and taken to my home in Oshawa, to be later picked up by Ethel herself, who would bring a driver to my home. This was not to be. Fate intervened again. It happened that Ethel had been struggling with illness. She was alone in the tall narrow house, except for her pets who were constantly by her side. Her housekeeping was neglected, as she distrusted the help she might have so easily acquired. Fortunately, two close relatives of her family came to stay with her. Pets were removed, and Ethel was immediately sent to the hospital, where a series of tests showed a terminal cancer. By this time nothing could be done and she pleaded to return to the home which she had not wanted to sell, as it had been such a part of her life. She would stay on deck, even when her ship was doomed, courageous in life, as well as in death.

Ethel disliked documents, and it came as no surprise that she had not made a will. Her family connections whom she seldom saw in life, helped dismantle the house, and stood by as her personal treasures were carried out, to be sold at auction.

What a blessing she had sold the Mill of Kintail, and to her happy satisfaction.

At last, she was at peace with the world, as well as herself.

Two weeks before her death, a letter came to me from her sister, stating that I was to have all the treasures I had packed at the Mill, in

appreciation and grateful thanks for giving my help and time, when she needed it most. I was deeply touched, and regretted I was unable to do more when she was so alone.



## CHAPTER    EIGHT

It was in 1952 that Jamie and Irene Leys started the renovations at the Mill. Roof leaks and beams were repaired. A basement wooden floor was replaced by cement to prevent the river flow rotting the boards which had provided an ideal spot for fungi to grow and multiply extensively. The many jobs were colossal.

A Memorial Day was introduced in honour of Tait McKenzie, and carried on through the years, and known as "McKenzie Day." There were many of these ceremonies I was able to attend. They were quite nostalgic to me, and the memories often floated back to me. Tearing the vines from the shutters, now cleared and painted. Plumbing problems, now of a minor nature. Yet Tait's twinkle in his eye, and his slow smile seemed to appear and give me the same message that one of Queen Victoria's admirers had once yelled, "Go to it old girl, you're doin' fine." It seemed I was still to be involved.

The Mill of Kintail was made an Historical Site by the Canadian Government, and a plaque unveiled by Mrs. McIntosh Bell, a family friend of the McKenzies and a leader in the community. The Mill was open to the public and thousands were able to see Tait's sculpture and collections. A Scottish Chapel was built, and a settlers cabin added, all of which carried out Tait and Ethel's fondest dreams. I had returned many of the Mill treasures I had packed, to be seen in their rightful place.

It was many years ago that Tait helped organize the St. Andrews Society in Philadelphia. Their member's interest grew throughout the years, not only in their Scottish ancestors, but in the fine sculpture work their

fellow member was creating. Upon his death, and as a tribute to him, they were able to collect many of his works and memorabilia, to present to the Mill of Kintail. Each year, members of the Society attended "McKenzie Day", wearing the kilts of their Scottish connection betrayed only by their soft American accent, as they extended greetings to Canada and the Mill. This also fostered good-will across the border, and received the close co-operation of Jamie and Irene. When years had slipped by, and the retirement of the Leys was imminent, the St. Andrews Society presented their medallion of Service to this distinguished couple, for their accomplishment in establishing the Museum which honoured their fellow member. The Canadian Government also recognized Jamie's fine work, as he received the Canadian Medal of distinction, so richly deserved, and for his contribution to the community as well.

Following the retirement, the Mill of Kintail was sold to the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, and the R.Tait McKenzie Day Observances are still held, usually on the Saturday nearest his birthday of May 26th. The community take pride in the McKenzie museum and the Mill of Kintail Historical Site.

While the power and inspiration of McKenzie might have ended here, it had been flashing brightly in other areas of my life.



C H A P T E R     N I N E

Tait and I had often talked of retirement. He had said he would never stop, as his sculpture was his hobby. I had no definite plans. My Mother had never had a hobby, yet lived happily into her nineties. She loved people as I did, and never lacked friends, as they were both the teens and the elderly. There was no generation gap. Although I assisted in giving courses on Eaton retirement as arranged by the Canadian Mental Health Association, I did not always agree in their ideas on the subject. My Mother's outlook seemed brighter and simpler. It was to accept changes and readily adapt to them.

Just before my retirement was due, I was suddenly awakened by the telephone one morning at the ungodly hour of eight-thirty. Who would dare call me at that hour, after working until nearly midnight the previous evening. Lifting the receiver slowly, a calm familiar voice said, "Miss Pitt, I would like to have you come to Switzerland for Christmas". I would have thought someone was pulling my leg, but recognized it as Lady Eaton's voice. "Thank you very much Lady Eaton", was my prompt reply. Quickly I thought of so many things I would have to do. My brother to pay my bills, oil and light for the house, snow removal, a baby sitter for the house, and many other needs. "I appreciate your asking me, and will be glad to see what I can do", was my bewildered reply. Knowing of Lady Eaton's trips abroad, and that they were often stretched at will, I had to plan accordingly.

Although there had been much to arrange, I found myself sitting aboard a plane on Dec. 13th. The date was not too lucky for me. We had been parked on the tarmac for over six hours, and the plane was continuously

being de-iced. Business men were now grumbling about missing appointments on account of the severe snowstorm. This irked Lady Eaton, who in a loud whisper that all could hear remarked, "They should all realize the delay is for their own safety, and relax. We might as well all join in the Christmas carols coming over the loud speaker." With that off her mind, and in her best voice she started off, with everyone joining in. Smiles were now to be seen everywhere, and in no time the wait was over and the plane smoothly took off. Arriving late in New York, we missed all the arranged Swissair connections, so were escorted to the ~~Park~~ Plaza, where we stayed overnight. Most of our luggage had gone on. I had my small overnight bag plus sleeping apparel, but Lady Eaton carried only her square cosmetic case with her medications and her pearls. I offered her my new negligee set, which she declined with a smile and thanks, adding that she "had slept in her slip a good many times". This proved her to be the excellent traveler that I knew her to be, even in her "over-eighties".

We found our plane went to London only, so had to speed around, talk quickly and be in line when a ticket showed up at the last minute. We had to leave our young maid behind, in the hope that she could get on the next flight.

All the way to Sils Maria in Switzerland, our special arrangements for a wheel chair had vanished. In changing trains, we hooked a ride on a passing suit-case freight cart, went down an elevator, under the tracks, through a dimly lit tunnel, to emerge above beside a smoky little restaurant, where we had the best sausage and hot coffee. Lady Eaton's mink coat, was a bright symbol of distinction, no matter how or where she travelled, and I swear it could perform miracles.



Christmas in Sils Maria seemed like fairyland. The Hotel looked like a castle, on top of a mountainside made of whipcream. Looking down from the "castle", the village houses seemed made of gingerbread, with red snowtrimmed roofs. Christmas eve was even more unreal, as the church bells called everyone to the little church completely lighted by candles. Carols combined with sleigh bells, all mixed with the soft organ music echoing through the cold frosty air.

Lady Eaton must have thought many times of other Christmases, when she and her husband Sir John had such a joyous holiday here with their family gathered around them. Although her husband's death was over forty years ago, she was joined by her children and grandchildren, to again celebrate Christmas in the Swiss Alps and at the same hotel. Skiing, skating, or tucked under the fur rugs of a horse-drawn sleigh, it all brought back many happy memories. It was a fine Merry Christmas, and indeed a very Happy New Year.

Going on to Germany, we spent some time in the Frankfurt area, enjoying the Opera, and the Festivals which added much gaiety to the city. We still noticed the war damage, now hidden by the growth of time. There stood the old Opera house, a shattered memorial without roof or windows, and a former library with only the front standing, still an architectural beauty with it's Grecian pillars standing solidly defying the world. Flying to Rome was an experience, as we suddenly dropped so quickly, a Mother behind me screamed and grasped her baby close in her arms. The umbrella pines seemed to be rushing to meet us, but the plane levelled out and made a smooth



landing. The pilot was a most versatile yet capable officer.

Staying at the Grand Hotel was like having the world on your doorstep. One day, returning from a shopping spree, I noticed many long black very shiny Cadillacs lined up at the curb entrance. They flew the red banners with hammer and sycle for identification. I was alone, so decided the side elevator would quietly take me to our suite. Going immediately to the elevator, I pushed the button to find it already was on the way. The door opened, and I was about to step on, when a burly thug stepped in front of me. I turned around to find I was encircled by men. The central small figure smiled, and motioned me to go ahead. This I did with a frosty thank you emerging from my lips. I crushed forward to be ready to get off at the third floor. The door opened, and again the huge man stopped me. I looked back, and sure enough the smiling gentleman signalled me to go ahead. On I went with their footsteps echoing close behind me.

The Hotel hallway was being painted at this time. A partition erected was to protect the passerby, but made only a narrow passage available. "This is great", I thought, and took my time, making my entourage look like a squaw leading an Indian band along a narrow trail through the woods. I stopped at my door, and slowly took my key out of my purse. They were forced to stop too, as there was no room for passing. Turning the lock, I couldn't help looking over my shoulder, to notice the little man, still smiling, as if he was enjoying it all, and I could not resist saying a warm "Thank you", directed to him, as I disappeared through the door.

It was only at tea time that the waiter informed me that Gromyko, #2 man in Russia, was our next door neighbour, and to think I had him trapped in the hall for at least three minutes. Holding up Russia, wasn't such a difficult task afterall.

Springtime descended quickly in Rome. The colourful flowers were in bloom everywhere. We hated to leave for Paris, but by this time music filled the air with the still popular tune, "I love Paris in the Springtime". Seeing their markets filled with flowers and fresh produce, you knew you were greeting another spring.

We crossed over to London, where our third spring bloomed in Hyde Park. The green lawns were covered with wall to wall broadloom of yellow daffodils. Landing back in Canada, we found our blossoms out, and red tulips adding colour to an otherwise dull Queens Park. I was simply amazed to realize that I had just seen, and enjoyed four springs in less than four months.

Tait, like Lady Eaton was a great world traveler and they both accepted the fundamental principals for enjoyment. "While in Rome, do as the Romans do" still rings true. Because you like green asparagras at home, don't scorn the pale insipid creamy coloured kind you may be served. It still tastes marvellous. If you have travel problems, don't get in a bind. Have patience, and it usually works out in a nice leisurely way. Both great travelers loved meeting people. Tait's friends practically covered the globe, and the house on Pine Street held gifts from the King of Sweden, our British King, as well as a sheik in Cairo, and many other notables.